

HISTORY OF
BALDWINSVILLE, N.Y.

by
Rev. W. M. Beauchamp

[Transferred from the 1885 history of Baldwinsville]

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Baldwinsville, the largest village in Onondaga county except Geddes, and the most important of any not directly connected with Syracuse, is situated on both sides of the Seneca river, being in the towns of Lysander and Van Buren. Its Indian name, as given us by Aunt Dinah, was Sta ha-he, referring to rocks in the water, where the old rifts made a fording place. It was early a favorite home of the red man, a number of Indian sites being known in and about the present village, which afford a great variety of curious relics. Mr. Otis M. Bigelow's fine collection of these, in the State Bank, is well known to antiquarians. The Seneca river, flowing through the village, was formerly known as Thiohero, or the river of rushes, in ascending; and later as the River of the Senecas, as leading to their country. In descending it was called the Oswego, according to Morgan, or the stream flowing out, through all its course.

The larger part of the village is in the town of Lysander, where it occupies portions of Lots 79, 80, 81, 85 and 86. These old military lots were drawn by soldiers of the Revolution, except Lot 86, which was reserved for Gospel and School purposes. Capt. Jonathan Titus drew Lot 79; Richard Davis, 80; Capt. Charles Parsons, 81, and Peter Scriber, 85. The Van Buren side is on Lot 7, of the original township of Camillus. This was drawn by Benjamin Epton. In very few cases did the original lot owners settle upon them, and this seems to have been the case here.

Lysander was one of the original eleven towns of the county of Onondaga, and as such comprised the three military townships of Lysander, Cicero and Hannibal. The latter two were taken from it in 1806 and 1807, and thirty-three lots were assigned to Granby when Oswego county was organized in 1816. Van Buren was part of the military township of Camillus, which at first included Elbridge. It was organized in 1829 and received its name as an offset to the naming of another new town after Henry Clay, a little before. It began to be settled from 1792 to 1794, and among familiar names occurring before 1810 are those of Joseph Wilson, William Lindsay, David Haynes, John McHarrie, Reuben Smith, James Wells, Eleazar Dunham, Heman Warner, Benjamin Bolton, Phineas Barnes, Jonathan Skinner and Charles H. Toll. Gabriel Tappan was the first Supervisor.

In Lysander, Royal Bingham settled near Three River Point in 1793; and Jonathan Palmer came to the center of the town in the same year. Before the year 1800 there also came Adam Emerick, Elijah and Solomon Toll, Thomas Farrington, Elijah Mann, Ebenezer Wells, James Cowan, Abner and Manly Vickery, and Job Loomis. Jacobus DePuy cleared off fifty acres in 1805 on the north side of the Seneca at Baldwinsville, which he sowed to wheat. Vanderkemp, in his journal of a voyage in 1792, takes note that one Barker lived on the east side of Three River Point, on the Gospel Lot, in the present town of Clay. He was a hard drinker and swearer, and his business was to take boats over the Oswego Falls. "At the south-west side of Oswego (river) is the valuable tract of L. Gansevoort, with here and there a cleared spot." At Phoenix was a fishing camp of the Onondagas, where they resorted in large numbers.

At an early day a large portion of western trade and travel passed up the Seneca river in bateaux and canoes. The early governors of New York speak of this as affording a safe and convenient channel for Indian trade, and many noted men might be mentioned who thus passed the rifts at Baldwinsville, long before the white settlers came. After the Revolution the light Durham boats, with their

setting poles, were a frequent feature of the river. They came up the Mohawk river, passed Oneida lake, and through the Seneca reached the lakes further west. In some such way came Dr. Jonas C. Baldwin with his family, on his way to Ovid in Seneca county in 1797. Charmed with the spot at first sight, they looked it over more carefully while their boat was being drawn over the rapids. That night they stopped with Mr. McHarrie, on the south side of the river, about forty rods above the present dam. From him they learned the owner's name, and soon purchased the land on the northern side.

Dr. Baldwin lived awhile in Ovid, but removed to Onondaga East Hill a little later, making his permanent residence in Baldwinsville in 1807. He immediately began building a dam across a small stream, with a wing dam in the river. On this were to be erected a grist and saw mill, A mistake in the level made a dam across the river necessary, and this was built in the face of prevalent sickness. A lock and canal were also required for the passage of boats, and the Legislature granted him a charter for river improvements in 1809. That year the dam was carried away, but another was completed the following year, when six saw mills under one roof, were put in operation. He also built a toll bridge across the river at the same time, and was instrumental in laying the old State Road between Onondaga Hill and Oswego.

When part of his property passed into the hands of his sons, Messrs Stephen W. and Harvey Baldwin in 1819, they rebuilt the toll bridge and dam, and enlarged the canal and locks, which at a later day became State property. They also bought land and laid out lots on the south side, and constructed the canal there. The old bridge was replaced by the present iron one in 1865.

Baldwinsville was once the center of a fine lumber district, pine trees being especially large and abundant. In some places they were so thick that it was difficult to fell them. Lumbermen naturally came to the front, and one of these, Col. James L. Voorhees, was widely known as "the Tall Pine of Lysander." Saw mills were many in number, and of large capacity, one built in 1826 having

fifteen saws. Among the early grist mills the finest was that erected by Sandford C. Parker, in 1836. It was 100 feet long, and made about 200 barrels of flour per day. To these might be added mills and factories of many kinds, some of which have passed away with the saw mills.

There have been changes of name also. Up to the establishment of a post office here in 1815, the place was called Columbia. The Postmaster General gave it the name of Baldwin's Bridge, but Baldwinsville was soon substituted for this, and has been retained ever since. Dr. Jonas C. Baldwin was the first postmaster, and was succeeded by Stephen W. Baldwin, Otis Bigelow, Austin Baldwin, Daniel T. Jones, and others. Dr. Baldwin also had a store from 1807 to 1818. Judge Otis Bigelow opened one in 1813, which was long continued. John Hamill opened another in 1816, and Baker & Wallace in the same year; Robins & Wells in 1832; Sandford C. Parker in 1835; John H. Tomlinson & Co., in 1838, and D. C. Lusk & Co. in 1846. W. H. Downer is the oldest merchant in the place, having commenced business here in 1845.

The first lawyer in the place was Reuben S. Orvis in 1816, and at a later day Judge Leroy Morgan lived here for awhile. Col. I. T. Minard came here in 1833, and D. C. Greenfield in 1848. The last two gentlemen have been Surrogates of Onondaga county.

The first tavern is said to have been just east of the present American Hotel, and another was kept by Dr. Silas Wallace, in 1824, where the Seneca Hotel now stands. The first tavern on the south side, the "Traveller's Home," will be remembered by many.

In his account of Baldwinsville, James M. Clark, formerly editor of the *Gazette*, gives many items which we summarize. Of early physicians he mentions Drs. J. C. & Cyrus Baldwin, Silas Wallace, Philip Sharp, J. H. Shumway, Farnsworth & Lec, Elijah Lawrence and John Briggs. To these might be added Dr. Daniel T. Jones, once a member of Congress.

Where the long store house of the Amos' mill now stands, once the "Otsego Fork Factory Shops," was a flouring mill, afterwards changed to a woolen factory by Kellogg &

Farr, which was burned, rebuilt, and again consumed by fire over thirty years ago. The Red Mill on the site of Amos's mill was destroyed at the same time. A large saw mill also stood where the Fork and Rake Factory is now located. On the same lot was a carding and cloth dressing establishment in 1827. This was afterwards changed for the manufacture of veneering. Pump boring was carried on where James Frazee's mill stands, and of course there was a saw mill on the same lot.

Perhaps fifty years ago, Walter D. Herrick, of the American Hotel, ran a line of stages to Syracuse, via. Belle Isle; and Col. S. W. Baldwin also ran a steam packet to Syracuse. Better speed and more comfort came with the Oswego and Syracuse railroad in 1848, and its lease by the D. L. & W. R. R. has greatly increased the freighting business, especially in coal. A short canal and lock, and a towpath to Mud Lock on the Oswego canal, are also considerably used by canal boats.

The first Supervisor of Lysander, in 1798, was Asa Rice, the town then embracing the three large townships of Lysander, Cicero, and Hannibal, but with only fifteen inhabitants, and a taxable property of fifteen hundred dollars. There could have been but little strife for office. Baldwinsville was incorporated as a village June 3, 1848, and its first President was Leroy Morgan.

Before the establishment of a post office, mail matter was brought from Salina and Onondaga Valley by anyone who might go there. Sometimes it was taken by boatmen from Salina to Sweet's tavern, opposite Three River Point. On the establishment of a post office it was carried on horseback for awhile.

The Red Schoolhouse, formerly on West Oneida street was for many years the sole place for teaching and worship. Church edifices after a time supplied one want, and various buildings for school purposes arose on both sides of the river. The old Academy, a brick building on Elizabeth street, now used for the primary department, was long the principal edifice of the kind. In 1864, District No. 18 in Van Buren, were united under the corporate name of the Baldwinsville Union Free School

District. A new Academy was erected on a fine lot in 1867, and in 1885 another fine schoolhouse was built on the south side of the river. The three buildings are of brick, and fourteen teachers are employed in the various departments. For the Board of Education two persons are elected in each of the three wards.

The Industrial Association of North-western Onondaga holds annual fairs on the ample grounds south of Baldwinsville, and these have a high reputation for the excellent exhibitions made of fruits, flowers, and stock, as well as other things. The Farmers' Club is also ably conducted in the winter, and productive of much profit. Since the increase of the tobacco industry some of its discussions call forth great interest.

Partly from this the *Baldwinsville Gazette* has taken a leading place in the estimation of farmers, as containing some of the most reliable reports on markets, and information on the care of tobacco, that can be found. No farmer can well afford to be without it, especially if he lives in New York. Historically it is the successor of the *Baldwinsville Republican*, founded by Samuel B. West in 1844, and the *Onondaga Gazette* published by C. M. Hosmer in 1846. Later editors have been J. M. Clark, J. B. Davis, X. Haywood, and George S. Clark. The present editor, Mr. J. F. Greene, has properly added the title of *Farmers' Journal* to its local name, as expressing its true character. Besides general and local intelligence, and useful agricultural matter, special attention is now devoted to the tobacco business, which has assumed large proportions in Baldwinsville and vicinity. The village is now a leading market for crops of this kind, and many large warehouses are found on its streets. Buyers resort here, and it is a lively scene when delivery day comes.

One prominent industry of the place is the manufacture of Centrifugal Pumps, and Vertical and Horizontal Engines, of which W. F. Morris became sole proprietor in 1884. It is now known as the "Morris Machine Works." The manufacture of these pumps was begun by Heald, Sisco & Co., in 1865, and 10,000 of them are said to be in

use in all parts of the world, mainly for wrecking purposes, in dry docks, tanneries and paper mills. Twenty-three out of twenty-six paper mills in Holyoke, Mass., now employ them. The buildings, machinery, etc., represent an investment of \$140,000, and it is the only establishment here which uses the electric light.

Five large flouring mills are in operation. The Frazee mill is 50x100 feet, four stories high, and was built in 1859. The Amos mill, still larger, was erected in 1868. The Hotaling mill was rebuilt in 1862, and was bought by the present proprietors in 1870. The Clark mill is the old Farmers' mill of Van Buren. The Wilkins mill was built by its present owner, as a custom mill, in 1854.

Millers' fine Knitting mills succeeded a woolen factory in 1876. They are of much interest, well equipped, and furnish employment to many persons.

The present Paper mill succeeds one established in 1865, and makes a large amount of straw wrapper.

Young's Fork and Rake factory stands on the spot where the Ax factory did a large business for many years.

The Fuller & Bliss Sash and Blind factory is another well known establishment, founded in 1866.

The marble shops, carriage factories, cooper shops, coal and lumber yards, cigar shops, and other industries afford employment to many.

Two Banks do a good business. The First National was organized in 1864, with a capital of \$140,000; and Baldwinsville State Bank in 1875, with a capital of \$50,000.

The First Presbyterian services in this village were held in 1813, and a church organized the same day. Its first edifice was erected in 1830, and the present one in 1865. Baptist services were first held in 1815, at Cold Spring, and a society was organized in 1818. Their first church edifice was built in Baldwinsville, in 1841, and the present one thirty years later. Grace church was organized in 1835, and its church edifice was finished in 1860. St. Mary's church was built in 1851. Methodist services began here in 1821, the first church was erected in 1844, and the present one in 1870.

Pleiades Lodge, No. 354, of Free and Accepted Masons, was formed in 1822. Seneca River Lodge, No. 160, succeeded to this in 1840, and the lodge room was burned in 1873. Riverside Chapter, No. 260, Royal Arch Masons, was organized in 1871, suffering by the same fire.

Mohegan Lodge, No. 29, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was formed in 1845. O. B. Herrick is the sole remaining charter member, and Hon. Schuyler Colfax assisted in the dedication of the present lodge room, in 1874.

Moses Summers Post, No. 278, G. A. R., was organized in 1882, and holds its meetings in the Kendall block. A handsome banner was presented to it on Memorial day, 1885. The larger part of the surviving members of the famous Pettit battery are found here.

The Order of United Friends organized a society here in 1883, and a lodge of A. O. U. W., formed in 1880, was afterwards removed to Plainville. Many other societies have had a transient existence.

Among the fine buildings recently erected are the Upson block, the Seneca Hotel, Connell's store, the Howard block, the *Gazette* building, and other brick edifices for business purposes, as well as many tasteful dwellings. Several new streets have been laid out, and a general improvement is everywhere apparent. Every visitor is impressed with the social character of the citizens and the business life of the place. Its schools have a high reputation; its manufactures are known throughout the world, scientists quote its articles of interest, and the mere pleasure seeker is charmed with its surroundings.

This county furnished parts of several regiments during the civil war, as well as some single companies; as Butler's Zouaves in the 3d N. Y.; the 3d, 10th, 12th, 15th, 20th, 22d and 24th Cavalry, with part of the 2d regiment of the Ira Harris Light Cavalry. Jennings' Battery was also from Onondaga, and in infantry portions of the 12th, 44th, 75th, 86th, 101st, 193d and 164th regiments. Baldwinsville was more directly interested in other organizations.

Battery B., 1st N. Y. Light Artillery, otherwise known as Pettit's Battery, was mustered into the State service at

Baldwinsville, Aug. 24, 1861, and into the U. S. service at Elmira, Aug. 31, of the same year. It was the first battery fully mounted at Washington, and was in 22 engagements in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. It was mustered out June 28, 1865; Rufus D. Pettit was Captain, and Albert S. Sheldon, First Lieutenant. Among the familiar names in this company we find those of J. B. Slauson, D. M. Perine, J. A. Skinner, E. P. Lockwood, J. Barclay, C. E. Minard, J. M. Scoville, T. C. Taggart and R. F. Thorn. Many others will be recalled.

Company A., of the 122d regiment, was raised at Baldwinsville, with Joshua B. Davis as Captain. It was filled Aug. 6, 1862, and the regiment was mustered in on the 26th. Previous to this Mr. Davis had been made Major, and Captain J. M. Brower took command. A. H. Clapp was 1st and Herbert S. Wells 2d Lieutenant. In this company were S. P. Carrington, J. S. Smith, D. Murphy, M. Donovan, J. Failing, G. H. Lusk, U. Turner and other well known residents. It served in the Army of the Potomac, and was mustered out June 27th, 1865.

In the 149th regiment this village had a less prominent part in the organization. Dr. J. V. Kendall was appointed surgeon, and Moses Summers Post, G. A. R., is named after its first quartermaster. Part of Company K. was enlisted here under Captain James C. Doran, with John Van Wie and Benjamin F. Breed as 1st and 2d Lieutenants. Among familiar names we observe those of S. Betts, P. Pelton, W. W. Tappan, H. Widger and R. Lanfare. D. D. N. Marvin, J. L. Decker and D. Skinner served in Company F. This regiment was with Sherman in his march to the sea, and served through the war.

Company A. of the 185th was mainly raised here, and was mustered in Sept. 22d, 1864, under Captain Stephen O. Howard, with Ephraim F. Bauder and William A. Brooks as 1st and 2d Lieutenants. It served around Richmond, and was discharged June 10, 1865. In this company were H. Baker, F. A. Bentley, H. Betts, W. H. Connell, E. S. Darrow, A. W. Goddard, A. Hosler, R. W. Hilton, J. E. Jones, J. Pedley, F. Powell, S. D. Taggart, J. D. Widrig and J. Wrightson.

We regret not giving a full list of those who served as volunteers from this vicinity, but have not time and space to do so now. The twenty years that have elapsed have brought so many changes that a careful muster roll would involve much labor.

